

Bill E. Graham
~~42694 Binswell Avenue~~
China, California 91710
(714) 627-9969

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Biography of:

JESSE ABNER GRAHAM I
Farmer & Baptist Minister
(Mar. 9, 1804 to Oct. 26, 1887)

MARTHA JANE "Patsy" (FANNING) GRAHAM
(July 9, 1811 to May 23, 1894)

ISSUE: Sarah Emeline, Isaac Jackson, Curtis Beason I, John Curtis, Ozias Denton MD,
Martha Jane, William Smith MD, Jesse Abner II, Hulda Ann, Benjamin Franklin,
James Monroe, and Mary Ellen

Jesse Abner Graham I was born in Surry County, North Carolina, in March, 1804, to John Graham I and Mary Graham. John was a pioneer farmer, a native of Western North Carolina during the period of Indian cessions, a direct descendant of the original progenitor of the Graham family in America, William Graham "The Signer" - he having come from Scotland by way of Ulster, Ireland.

Jesse's childhood in North Carolina was a frontier existence. He helped his parents in the fields during the week, and went with his family on Sunday to the Presbyterian church in Surry County. The trip by wagon over rough trails and roads required the family to leave home before daybreak, and their return, after two or more Calvinist sermons, was much after dark. The discomfort of the trip was offset, however, by getting to play with other children between services at church. And the lunches, prepared at home and brought to church in a basket, were spread on rough tables under shade trees and shared by everyone. Those experiences were to influence Jesse's relationship with God throughout his life.

He also learned to shoot a gun and hunt game at an early age. He learned from his father, John, to hunt squirrels, rabbits, and other small game with which to supplement the family's diet of smoked pork, which soon became rancid during the hot summer months. Too, he learned to pick wild fruits and nuts. During John's absences from home, sometimes for several weeks, in Indian wars, participating in political meetings, etc., Jesse was expected to carry on as man-of-the-house. That meant, besides working the fields with oxen-pulled ploughs, mending fences to contain the family livestock, and guarding the fields against the incursions of large game. A herd of deer could destroy a growing corn crop in a few hours, and after the corn had matured, bears would gather a stack of 30 to 40 ears and then sit down to enjoy a feast. Jesse learned to perfect his marksmanship with the flintlock rifle of his father, a skill that would serve him well in adult years of fighting off marauding Indians.

At the age of 10, Jesse's parents moved to the big bend area of the Tennessee River in the portion of Mississippi that was to become the State of Alabama. The year was 1814, and Western North Carolina had become too populated to please those who had settled there when individual freedoms were not constrained and fences were not necessary. Further, the arable lands in North Carolina had been farmed without revitalizing the soil, and the farms had grown tired. John had two sons other than Jesse, with more likely to come, so he removed his family to an area where his sons could have land when they matured. He loaded his family and all their belongings in a wagon, tied the chicken coups with the chickens on the side of the wagon, and headed for Cherokee Territory in convoy with family friends, the Lambs and Penningtons, and the milk cows were led behind the wagons.

John settled in the northeast corner of the Territory of Mississippi, which is present day Alabama. Although it was Cherokee territory, the Indians had

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passively accepted the white settlers at the period John entered the territory. He selected lands in the Third and Fourth Ranges, which was west of the Paint Rock River, and the Willis Lamb family homesteaded in the First and Second Ranges near the Gramhams. The Penningtons found land nearer the Paint Rock River.

The State of Alabama was formed in 1819, as was the county of Jackson. At first Jackson County comprised all of the Cherokee territory of the big bend portion of the Tennessee River, but a portion of Jackson County, the western side, was taken away to form Madison County, and again in 1836 more land was taken away from Jackson County to form Marshall County. John's family was listed in the 1830 census of Alabama as still residing in the same household in Madison County. Living in John's home were one male and one female between the ages of 60 and 70 - those were John and Mary; and two males between 20 and 30 - who would have been Jehu (Hugh) and John II. (Actually John II was only 17, but as has been seen so many times in comparing census data with other known and documented information, census takers made no special effort to achieve accuracy!) Four other children were born after John II, but none of them were shown on the 1830 census because David and Jennie both died as infants before the census, and the 9th child, Martha, is presumed to also have died in infancy. The 8th child, Gideon I, was 13 at the time and should have been shown on the census. Perhaps the reason that he was not was because he was living with one of the older children, either Mary or Jesse - both of whom were married - to be more convenient to a school.

In 1827, Jesse married into a well-known pioneer family, the Fannins. (In some documents spelled "Fanning". Illiteracy prevailed on the frontiers in 1790 when the first American census was taken, and it was often the census taker who supplied the spelling to names of citizens who could not spell their own.) Middleton and Delpha Ann (Moore) Fannin were born and raised in Virginia, but moved to Franklin County, Tennessee, after their marriage. There they raised a family of 5 sons, Mike, Ben, Thomas, Buck, and Jim; and two daughters, Martha Jane and Sally. Whether or not Middleton and Delpha moved to Jackson County is not known, but some of the boys did. The Records of Deeds in Jackson County show several grants in Township 1 South, 3 East Range, with residue in Madison County, to Thomas D. Fannin. There were several other grants to Stephen and Milton L. Fannin, believed to be sons of Middleton's brother. Another son was James W. Fannin, of Texas fame.

The involvement of James Fannin in the Texas War of Independence is a legacy of adventure so typical of the American frontier. Stephen F. Austin, in 1821, had taken over his father's grant in Texas, a Mexican territory, and by authority of the Mexican government's Colonization Law of 1823, founded a colony of American settlers east of the Colorado River. It was so successful that by 1836 the Anglo-American population of Texas reached thirty thousand - more than the total of Mexicans and Indians combined. But winds of rebellion soon blew as successive Mexican presidents were overthrown and events hostile to the colonists - although partly imagined - occurred. Austin was imprisoned in Mexico without cause for several months. Mexican resentment of the Texans grew, and Santa Ana, the new Mexican president, ordered the Mexican military to subjugate the Texans. Austin left for the United States to obtain aid for Texas. Among those who responded to Austin's plea was James W. Fannin. Curiosity makes one wonder if James suspected, as he left Franklin County, Tennessee, that the territory of his destiny would one day be the adopted home of his relatives.

James was commissioned a colonel in the Texas Army, and instructed to raise men for an attack on Matamoros - in Mexico. James viewed it as a mad scheme, and retained his troops at Goliad. In the meantime, the Texans held a convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos in early 1836 and drew up a Declaration of Independence. Santa Ana reacted by heading toward San Antonio with an army to destroy the Texans at the Alamo, and ordered General Urrea to lead his army to Goliad and destroy the Texas forces there. Those Goliad forces were commanded by Colonel James W. Fannin. War was on.

James, a brave and patriotic man, is doubtless the most tragic figure of the Texas Revolution. He had received his military training at West Point and probably knew more about the theory of warfare than any other Texas officer. But inept leadership of other officers was to be his downfall. Colonel Travis had called upon Fannin for aid in defending the Alamo, which Fannin left Goliad to give. But in route he received orders from General Sam Houston to withdraw to Victoria. In the meantime General Urrea's force of about 450 men had caught up to Fannin's force of about 300 men. Fannin formed his men into a hollow square, reminiscent of combat in the Scottish wars, and the deadly rifle fire of the Texans drove back three attacks of the Mexicans. Seven Texans were killed and 60 were wounded - Fannin among them. Mexican losses were about 200 men killed and wounded. During the night Urrea received two pieces of artillery and 500 reinforcements, and the Texans were overwhelmed. A truce flag was raised, and Urrea agreed to let the Texans return to their homes. However, on orders from Santa Ana, the Texas troops were marched out onto the prairie and shot. The merciless slaughter of these men became known as the Goliad Massacre, and "Remember the Alamo; Remember Goliad" became a rallying war cry of the Texans in their victory over the Mexicans. Located a short distance from the presidio at Goliad, Texas, on their burial place, stands a monument for the victims of the Goliad Massacre.³ Jesse Graham I married into this brave family of Fannins.

The member of the Fannin family that Jesse married was Martha Jane Fannin, known affectionately to her friends as "Patsy". Where he met her, and details of their courtship are not known, but they were married in 1827 and moved to the Princeton community on the Paint Rock River in Jackson County. Jesse had claimed some land there, and it was near that of his father.

Paint Rock valley is in the western part of Jackson County and extends northwardly from the town of Paint Rock to the Tennessee State line. The Paint Rock River is formed by the junction of the Hurricane and Estill's creeks, and a little lower down is Larkin's creek. All these creeks rise in the mountains near the Tennessee-Alabama state line. The river flows in a southerly direction, gradually increasing in size by a number of creeks. Lick Fork Creek flows into Paint Rock River near Princeton, on the west; then Dry Creek also on the west; next is Guess Creek on the east, near Trenton; then Clear Creek on the west near Garth, with a number of big branches or small creeks that flow into this river along the way. The Cumberland Mountain is on the east, and a number of smaller mountains on the west. This river is 65 miles long and empties into the Tennessee River fifteen miles below Gunter'sville, at the Painted Bluff. In its lower stretches it forms the boundary line between Marshall and Madison counties. It gets its name from the Painted Bluff at its mouth.

When Jesse and the other settlers first went to the Paint Rock Valley, they made their homes up in the Coves and on the sides of the Mountains. Down near the river, there were so much big timber, vines, and ponds that the land was too hard to clear for cultivation. The land in the coves was very rich and loose.

As clearing the timber for fields was slow, Jesse's fields at first were small. If not closely guarded, some years the squirrels, coons, and bears would eat nearly all of his corn. Otherwise the rich soil gave a rich yield. And Martha did not need to raise turkeys for there were great flocks of wild turkeys in the nearby woods. When they wanted a turkey for dinner, Jesse would go out and shoot one. The plentiful woods also gave the family's hogs enough beech mast and nuts to eat that they required little or no feed at all. Carrier pigeons, now extinct but then so numerous that the weight from their numbers would break off a roosting limb, were a constant source of food for the table.

Jesse's house was made of logs. The storage room had a dirt floor, but the other rooms had a puncheon floor - slabs split out of logs and hewn smooth with a broadax. Popular trees provided good logs for splitting.

The settlers of the Valley had surnames that are familiar to the Grahams. It can be seen from the Graham Family Records that Graham children found their spouses from among the neighbors. A map showing the location of the settlers in the Paint Rock Valley is shown on the next page. Beginning at the head of Hurricane Creek was found the Gifford, Sanders, Dodson, Jack, Bishop, McCollough, Martin, Collins, and Anderson families. On Estill's Fork were the Burks, Wilson, Sims, Mins, Gray, Sisk, Langham, Hood, Trice, Money, Reid, Robertson, Collins, and Gayle families. Further down the river were the Grimmett, Vanzant, Bulman, Holland, Hinshaw, Tuxpin, Austell, Morris, Martin, Robertson, Miller, Walker, Fowler, and Grant families. On Larkin's Fork were the families of Kennedy, McCollum, Riddle, Brewer, Cagle, Arnold, Jack, King, Cox, Dubois, Shepard, Beason, Reed, Allen, Butler, Clung, Hall, Trice, Hickman, Fanning, Calloway, Simmons, and Grewen. And further down the river were the Dwire, Duncan, Graham, Russ, Stovall, Middleton, Williams, Williamson, and Blackwell families. On Lick Fork were the families of Campbell, Pattiller, Bostick, Thompson, Manly, Scorlock, Rowen, Bates, Yeats, Wright, Cham, Scott, Davis, Clay, Lamb, Vanzant, Martin, Poston, and Horton families. Still further on down the river were located the families of Pennington, Hambrick, Woodfin, Campbell, Tony, Davis, Williamson, Creswell, Cunningham, Howell, Mooney, Vaught, Padgett, Davis, Hill, Berry, Webb, Hethering, Frazier, William, Cardin, Hunter, Latham, Wilson, Kirkpatrick, Wilbourn, Johnson, Crawley, Smith, Sercy, Hale, Jones, Derrick, Daniel, Rousseau, Lilly, Clark, Sinclair, Flanagan, Mead, Renfro, Lewis, and Yarbrough. A good portion of those surnames were destined to become relatives through marriage to the Grahams.

Agriculture was the main industry of the valley settlers. They raised corn, oats, wheat, pumpkins, and a little cotton. They also raised horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs. They cut the wheat and oats with a scything cradle, and since there were no thrashers, they threshed the grain by piling it on a barn floor or large flat rock and riding horses over it to tramp out the grain. They separated the wheat from the straw and chaff by pouring it from one tub to another in the wind, or with hand fans.

Childbirth on the frontier was precarious at best. Doctors did not exist; mid-wives were scarce; so neighbor women were relied upon to assist one another during childbirth. It was common to lose every third or fourth child during infancy. However, Martha and Jesse were more lucky than most. Of 12 children, only the last one, Marry Ellen, died as a child. After their marriage in 1827, Jesse's children began arriving in 1828. Their names and order of birth are given at the head of this section.

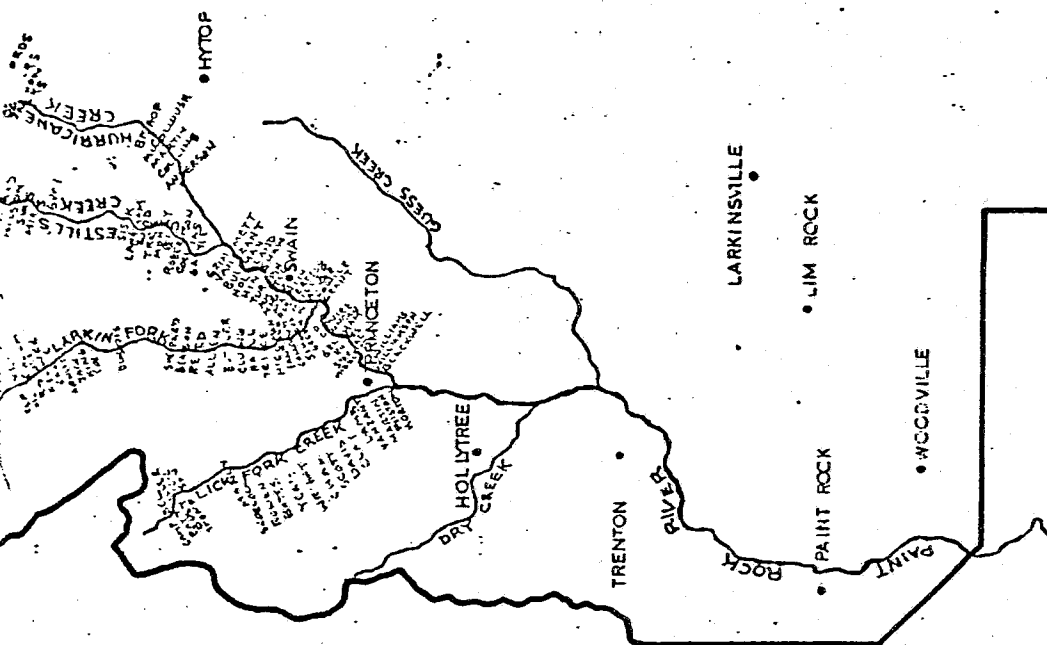
Life in Jackson County was exciting for the children. Even though they had the drudgery of working in the fields - ploughing, hoeing, cutting sorghum cane, pulling corn, and picking cotton - there were plenty of family and community activities to be fun for the children. Families lived close enough that the children could exchange visits often. And Jesse took the older children with him in the ox-drawn wagon of sorghum cane to be processed into sorghum, to Bell Factory in Madison County to have the wheat ground, or to the cotton gin from which the bales would be floated by raft down the Paint Rock River to the Tennessee River to be carried to the New Orleans market. Hogs were raised and driven on foot to central Alabama in large droves, and sold to large cotton planters. This was a great trip for the boys to see a little of the world. They would be gone several weeks, and as there were no trains to ride, they walked back home.

A Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized on Dry Creek at an early date. Henry Larkin of the Tennessee Presbyterians did the preaching. But the zealous fervor of the emotion-laden Baptists also came to Paint Rock Valley. The Mud Creek Primitive Baptist Association was organized in 1821 by the Paint Rock Baptist Church, and John William was the preacher.⁴ All believers subscribed

LOCATION OF PIONEER SETTLERS IN PAINT ROCK VALLEY

JACKSON CO

SCALE:
1.0" = 4.4 MI.



to the 14 fundamental articles of faith on which the Primitive Baptists were founded, and practiced such acts of humility as washing one another's feet during the service. Such lack of pretention and dedication to salvation by faith attracted Jesse to conversion in 1922, an act that would strongly influence his remaining life. For although he could not write, he could read, and with the tutelage of "Brother John William", Jesse became an itinerant Baptist preacher by 1827 when he was 23 years old.

By the end of Andrew Jackson's administration as president of the United States, ninety-four Indian treaties had been signed, most of which were treaties of cession. Even the Cherokees left sullenly for the West. But a disciplinary war had to be fought in order to subject the Indians wholly to the white man's will. The Seminoles refused to leave their homes, so the Seminole War was necessary to remove them.⁵ Jesse and his younger brother, Gideon Graham, both fought in the war. Jesse was a private in Martin Company, Chisolm Battalion; and Gideon was a private in Company D, Snodgrass Battalion.

The "Alabama Fever" soon made Alabama the Cotton Capital of America. Land speculators, brokers, slave traders, and large absentee cotton planters poured into the state to preempt all remaining arable lands. Opportunities for small settlers were, at best, greatly curtailed. In the 1840s and 1850s, farms in Alabama and Mississippi were being abandoned for fresher lands in Texas and Arkansas.

By 1849 Jesse Graham had good reason to reflect on his family's future in Alabama. Not only were the nutrients becoming exhausted in his fields, but he then had ten children, seven of whom were boys, for whom he had to provide. Further, the older four sons were nearing adulthood and would soon need land of their own. Because of those considerations, Jesse - as his father before him had done - loaded up into a wagon and headed west for Texas. In route Jesse stopped for a few months in Shreveport, Louisiana, and he and his oldest son, Curtis Beason I, freighted between Shreveport and Alabama. Later that year he moved to Rusk County, Texas, and made his home there for 6 years while teaming between Henderson, Texas, and Shreveport, Louisiana.

Conditions were primitive in Rusk County. The removal of his family to another crude frontier resulted in the loss of some of the comforts and refinements of civilization for the Grahams. However, they busily began to reconstruct. Jesse and his older sons built a double cabin with a passage or breezeway between its two rooms. It lacked windows, and at first the chinks between the logs were not sealed with mud. Frederick Law Olmsted observed in 1853 that the majority of the planters of the Southwest lived in such cabins.

One of the priorities of those Scottish descendants after they had built a shelter in which to live was the establishment of a school for their children. Jesse helped to build and support, and his children attended, the first school to be built in Rusk County. The school house was located some two miles southwest of Hendricks Lake, one and one-half miles north of the town of Tatum. Eli Ware was the school teacher. The school house was built of logs, was about 20x20 feet in proportions, and had a hard clay floor. The pupils sat on split log benches, and there were no desks. A six or seven foot fireplace furnished heat in cold weather. The pupils rarely exceeded twenty in number. Jesse's children who attended full-time were John Curtis and Martha Jane. Curtis Beason was 18, and Ozias Denton was 14; and they attended part-time. Other Grahams in attendance were Mrs. John W. Graham (maiden name and relationship unknown) and Seburn Graham (relationship unknown). Jesse's oldest son, Isaac Jackson, was shown in the 1850 census of Rusk County as being a 21 year old school teacher, and lived in the same household as Jesse.

The nation of Texas gave up its independence in 1846 by electing to become a state in the United States. The turbulent Government of Texas had stabilized

as a state government, and settlers were pouring in from other states. From friends Jesse learned that Coryell County was being opened up to settlement, so in 1855 he loaded his household in a wagon and removed to Coryell County - leading the livestock behind the wagon. Jesse's younger brother, Gideon I, had followed him to Rusk County, Texas, from Alabama, and again followed him to Coryell County. They were among the first intrepid pioneers who settled in Central Texas in 1855 when the Comanches menaced the sparsely settled region embracing Coryell, San Saba and Lampasas Counties. Jesse settled on Brown's Creek, near the Cowhouse River, about fifteen miles southeast of Fort Gates. Gideon first settled at Station Creek in Coryell County, but later settled on Henson's Creek, or Cowhouse River, near his brother, Jesse. An original petitioner for the creation of Coryell County, Jesse and the other settlers succeeded in separating it from Bell County. A county seat was established on the east bank of the Leon River at Grant's Mill, about six miles northwest of Fort Gates. Established October 26, 1849, by Capt. Wm. R. Montgomery, 8th U. S. Infantry, as a part of the frontier defense system, Fort Gates was abandoned in March, 1852.

The land in which Jesse and Gideon settled was bountiful in nature. Creeks and rivers supplied plenty of water, and ample grazing was provided by the lush prairie grasses. Fruits and nuts grew wild, particularly in the river bottoms. Land was abundant for claiming, and as the Comanches were to discover, the settlers were not bashful in "claiming". As pertained to Jesse Graham, he had assisted his adult sons in establishing claims, and had claimed 800 acres of his own - enough to provide for his minor children when they became adults. One of Jesse's sons, Jesse Abner Graham II, was born in Alabama and moved to Texas with his parents in 1849. In 1914 he described Coryell County in an article in the *Gatesville News*, the *Gatesville* newspaper: "....This was a wild country then, but pretty. There were wild animals of nearly every description, and wild Indians for many years. I knew lots of people they killed and scalped. I helped bury three of my neighbors at Sugarloaf in one day...." He described the development he had observed in Texas since he had traveled in a wagon with his parents from Rusk County to Coryell County: "....We saw Dallas when it could almost have been hauled on a two-horse wagon...."

By age 27, Jesse Abner Graham I had become a Baptist preacher. By the time he settled in Texas he had become recognized and several records were made of his accomplishments. Early settlements, almost without exception, had a handful of Primitives, or as they were more familiarly known, "Hard Shell" Baptists, and Coryell County was not an exception. Elder Jesse Graham was one of the first of these settlers, about 1855, and he was also about the first of their leaders. In the Sugar Loaf Mountain Community were a number of "Old Baptists", later called Primitive Baptists, who had no organized church services. On the 4th Sunday in August, 1856, near Sugar Loaf Mountain, Elder Jesse Graham called together the Baptists of that community and organized the Sugar Loaf Mountain Church. The church was constituted on 14 articles of faith which all Old Baptists heartily believed. This was the first church of this faith organized in the county. Jesse served as pastor until his death. The original members were: Martha Jane Graham (Jesse's wife), James and Nancy Whatley, William and Nancy Kinsley, and Joel "Joe" and Sarah Emeline Blackwell (Jesse's oldest daughter). Jesse also established the Rainey Creek Baptist Church in the same county in 1857.¹⁴ However, his pastorate was to the Sugar Loaf Church. He served it in that capacity until his death. Apparently the Indians were less impressed with the presence of Pastor Graham's church than were the white settlers, for in 1860 they attacked Elder J. C. White and Elder Griffith near the Rainey Creek Church. White and Griffith escaped into the brush, but Griffith was so badly wounded that he afterward died.¹⁵

Ministers who waited on these early churches usually traveled as Jesse did, in buggies or on horse back - often traveling many miles to serve a church.

There was little monetary remuneration, so the preachers were usually farmers, as was Jesse. But they laid the spiritual foundations well in Central Texas. Churches grew from the faith that Jesse planted to such accessibility by 1936 that Frank E. Simmons boasted, "....anyone who wishes may attend church (in Coryell County) any week of the year." Indeed, like the rest of the Bible Belt South, church activities have grown so diverse and concentrated in Coryell County that by the middle 1980s anyone may attend a church activity any hour of the day or evening - any day of the year!¹⁶

In the 1850 census of Rusk County, Jesse was listed as a Baptist Clergyman. He was listed as 45 years old, and Martha was listed as 39. Their oldest daughter, Sarah Emeline, was not listed in Jesse's residence since she had married Joel Blackwell in 1843 and left home. Apparently she and Joel had preceded Jesse to Rusk by a couple of years as their third child, George Grant Blackwell, was born in Rusk County. Jesse's other children were still living at home. They were: Isaac Jackson, 21, listed as a school teacher; Curtis Beason, 18, a farmer; John Curtis, 16, a farmer; and Ozias Denton (14), Martha Jane (11), William Smith (9), Jesse Abner II (7), Hulda Ann (4), and Benjamin Franklin (1). By 1860 after Jesse and Martha had moved to Coryell County and the census was taken, the oldest five children had married and moved away from home. Remaining in Jesse's residence were the younger four listed above and James Monroe, who was seven years old and had been born since the last census. Jesse was listed as a Baptist Minister; and shown as owning 800 acres of real estate that was valued at \$8,000. Also listed in Jesse's residence was Mary Graham, Jesse's mother, who was listed at 79 years of age. Since she had not previously been shown as living with Jesse, it is reasonable to think that her husband, John Graham I, had died subsequent to 1850 and she had gone to Texas to live with her children. However, she spent a short time only with Jesse; she spent most of her time with the Lambs - her in-laws. By 1870, only Benjamin Franklin and James Monroe were still at home, but by 1880, they were married and gone and Jesse and Martha were alone. He was still listed as a minister, and she was listed as a Housekeeper. The census showed most of their children living relatively close. Sarah Emeline and her husband, Joel Blackwell, lived on the Cowhouse River. Curtis Beason I married Elizabeth Thornton and lived near Harmony. Ozias Denton married Martha M. Thornton, believed to be related to C.B.'s wife, had become a physician and was living nearby. Martha Jane was married to James D. "Jim" Manning, and was close, as were William Smith, who married Ann Elisa Alley; Jesse Abner II, married to Cornelia Griffin; Benjamin Franklin to Sarah Abigail Flemming, and James Monroe, who married Elizabeth Jane Flemming. Isaac Jackson who married Sarah Dee Kinsey, was also living in Coryell County, but his name was not found in 1870 census of Coryell County. Hulda Ann had married J. P. McCloud in 1870 and moved with him to Georgetown, Colorado.

As their Scottish ancestors before them, the Grahams in Coryell County felt a strong sense of civic responsibility. As early as 1859 Gid Graham, Jesse's brother, two of Jesse's sons, Curtis B. and John C., and two of Jesse's sons-in-law, Joel Blackwell and James D. Manning, were serving as jurors in the Coryell County Court. In 1861 the Grahams responded to the need for law and order again. On the "Muster Roll of a Company of Mounted Rangers, Texans, raised by Captain William Clements of Coryell County, Texas. Said Company being raised for the purpose of protecting the Frontier of the State of Texas...." dated September 27, 1861, volunteers from the Graham clan were as follows: Isaac Jackson Graham, 24, with a gun and horse; Jesse Graham II, 18, with a horse; J. D. Manning, 36, (husband of Martha Jane Graham), with one horse; John Curtis Graham, 27, with a horse; and William Smith Graham, 21, with one horse. Three years later in January of 1864, Gideon Graham was appointed a Captain by the governor of Texas to raise a company of men to defend against the marauding

Comanche Indians. Captain Gideon Graham raised 67 men to form that company on the Second Frontier District. Among those 67 were Curtis Beason Graham I, 30, who provided his own rifle, and Jackson Graham, who also provided his own rifle.

True to the Scottish values handed down to his generation, Jesse Graham had a fervent interest in religion and education. His efforts in founding churches in Coryell County has already been mentioned, and that interest prevailed the rest of his life. On the 5th of August, 1884, he and Martha donated three acres of land to be used for a church and a school. The Primitive Baptists were to be given priority in the use of the church on the third weekend of each month; otherwise the church was to be used by "any other minister of any other order so as not to interfere with each other's days....".¹⁷ The school was for School Community #59 of Coryell County, and is believed to be the Harmony School that many of Jesse's grandchildren and other descendants attended.

Jesse Graham rose from his meager birth, survived many hardships in life on the frontier, and managed to build an admirable estate in Coryell County. When he drew his Last Will & Testament on November 26, 1884, he had a large herd of cattle, hogs and other livestock. His registered brand and ear-marks for his cattle are shown in the appendix. And among his most prized possessions was his "stock of horses". In his younger years he had obtained some horses with the best bloodlines in the South to crossbreed with his own choice broodmares, and he had one of the finest horse herds in Texas. He was careful in his will to name his second-from-youngest son, Benjamin Franklin Graham, to retain control of the horses, as well as serve as executor of the estate.¹⁸

Jesse was a man of striking appearance; stood six feet, two inches tall; weighed about 210 pounds; had blue eyes and light colored hair; possessed marked firmness; was a true Christian; carried the gospel to pioneer log cabin churches on horseback. He did not preach for salary, but for the love of God and farmed his homestead while performing his duties as a minister of the gospel. He never compromised with wrong doing and his stern precepts of Christian duty inspired the hardy pioneers over a large area.

His faithful wife, Martha Jane "Patsy" (Fanning) Graham, was truly a loyal and inspiring help-mate - a fitting consort for such a pioneer as her noble husband. For almost 40 years they lived on their homestead in Coryell County and saw the country develop; depredation of the Comanches cease; and cities, churches and schools grow. They were splendid citizens; helped promote law and order and bequeathed to this Republic a family of 12 children from whose ranks came farmers, ranchers, tradesmen, soldiers, teachers, clergymen, scholars, physicians, jurists and legislators. The world has been made better for them having lived.

The Graham Cemetery near Brown's Creek was started by Jesse when he donated the land for it and told his wife, Martha, "I want my head to rest near this cedar tree on this knoll."²⁰ The cemetery consisted of an approximate acre of land on his homestead where the people of the community could bury their dead. It was maintained by the people of the community who met there about two week-ends per year for "graveyard workings". The Graham Graveyard ceased to be in 1941 when the U. S. Government pre-empted by right of eminent domain most of the land in Coryell County on which to build "Camp Hood", later to become Fort Hood. It was the largest U. S. Army base in America. The Graham Cemetery was within that territory, so the federal government "moved" it to Gatesville, Texas, and included the graves in the "Old Gatesville Cemetery", the name of which was later changed to Restland Cemetery.

A pragmatic man, Jesse bought his own coffin several years before he died. It sat in his living room,²¹ perhaps as a navigational aid in the direction of life.

Who knows? Whatever the reason, he died of "the flux" on the 26th of October, 1887, and was buried in the Graham Cemetery. His tomb was engraved as follows: "In memory of Eld. Jesse Graham; Born March 9, 1804; Died in full triumph of a living faith Oct. 26, 1887. Was a Prim. Bap. 65 years and a minister of the gospel of Christ 56 years and a Moderator of Concord Am. 28 years."

Martha followed Jesse in death seven years later. She was buried beside Jesse under a tomb inscribed, "Martha J.; Wife of Elder Jesse Graham; Born July 9, 1811; Died May 23, 1894. Our Mother: In God's morn her orb will rise, Once more a star in Paradise."

- ¹ Bernice Graham Fowlkes, A Graham Genealogy, Privately printed, Conway, Ark. 1964
- ² Archibald Henderson, The Conquest of the Old Southwest, The Century Co., N.Y., 1920
- ³ Ralph W. Steen, The Texas Story, The Steck Co., Austin, Texas, 1960
- ⁴ John Robert Kennamer, History of Jackson County, Southern Printing and Publishing Co., Winchester, Tenn., 1935
- ⁵ John D. Hicks, The Federal Union, Second Edition, Houghton Mifflin Co., The Riverside Press, Cambridge
- ⁶ Benjamin Achee and Margaret Wright, Index for Compiled Service Records Alabama Units - Florida War
- ⁷ Clement Eaton, The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860, Harper and Brothers, New York, p. 41
- ⁸ Ibid, p. 40
- ⁹ Garland R. Farmer, Rusk County
- ¹⁰ Frank E. Simmons, History of Coryell County, 1936
- ¹¹ Robert W. Frazer, Fort of the West, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman
- ¹² A Memorial and Biographical History of McLennan, Bell, & Coryell Counties, Texas, 1893, p. 591
- ¹³ Frank E. Simmons, History of Coryell Co., 1936, p. 40
- ¹⁴ Bell County Records, Volume #1, Hill and Martin, 1969
- ¹⁵ Frank E. Simmons, History of Coryell County, 1936
- ¹⁶ Ibid
- ¹⁷ Grant of land from Jesse and Martha Graham, dtd. 5 August, 1884
- ¹⁸ Last Will and Testament of Jesse Graham I, dtd. 26 November, 1884
- ¹⁹ Gid Graham, The Dawson-Graham and Allied Families, 1938
- ²⁰ Personal interview with Bertha Mae (Graham) Hilliard, daughter of Benjamin F. Graham and grand-daughter of Jesse A. Graham I, in 1956.